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WAR VERSUS MOOTW: A MATTER OF CONSENT

by

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U.S. Department of State

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of the Navy or the Department of State.

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Abstract of

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A new operational framework, which distinguishes between combat operations, military contingency operations and MOOTW on the basis of levels of threat and consent is offered. The authors of revised MOOTW doctrine should also consider the adoption of three new principles -- preservation of consent, local knowledge and versatility.

There are significant differences between war and MOOTW. But at their cores, the two are functionally inseparable -- the embodiment of the use of military power to obtain a political object of vital interest at a cost and risk commensurate with the stakes involved.

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... a conventional military force trying to control, by conventional military methods, a people that did not behave like a conventional enemy, and indeed, quite often was not an enemy at all. This is the most difficult of all military assignments.<sup>1</sup>

-- historian Robert Utley commenting on U.S. Army activities in the American West

### Introduction and thesis

Since the end of the Cold War, the operational principles once embodied in the doctrinal concepts of "small wars" and "low intensity conflict" have been reborn as "military operations other than war" (MOOTW). Military journals teem with articles on such topics as peacekeeping, nation assistance and counter drug operations. A comprehensive publication on the subject, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other than War, was released by the Joint Chiefs in June 1995.<sup>2</sup> Real world events appear to have validated the relevance of this resurgence in interest in MOOTW doctrine with the recent "non-war" deployment of U.S forces in such far-flung locales as Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Macedonia.

But while joint military doctrine may have embraced MOOTW, many members of the military, the political establishment and the public have not. MOOTW skeptics variously assert that these operations place insufficiently armed soldiers in ambiguous, dangerous environments far removed from U.S. vital interests; that the military cannot afford to shoulder the "new" burdens of MOOTW; and, that MOOTW's objectives are inherently vague when compared to clear-cut combat operations.

Unfortunately, current MOOTW doctrine is often misunderstood and the framework and typology recently outlined in joint publications, the range of military operations, is of

limited value to the commander. The task here will be to develop an expanded military operational framework which clarifies both the operational similarities and differences between war and MOOTW and to suggest that on the strategic level the two are functionally inseparable.

It's a MOOTW world out there -- sort of

The bedrock for current U.S. national security strategy is the conviction that with the end of the Cold War, the world has become a more uncertain place and hence American policy must respond to a new set of challenges:

The current security challenge of the past half century...is gone. The dangers we face today are more diverse. Ethnic conflict is spreading and rogue states pose a serious danger...The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represents a major challenge...Large scale environmental degradation...threatens to undermine political stability in many countries...<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the "United States must deploy robust and flexible military forces that can accomplish a variety of tasks"<sup>4</sup> to include combating terrorism, fighting drug trafficking, evacuating U.S. citizens, supplying training and advice to friendly governments, and providing assistance in cases of humanitarian disaster.<sup>5</sup> The National Security Strategy also argues that "we must prepare our forces for peace operations to support democracy or conflict resolution...Peace operations often have served, and continue to serve, important U.S. national interests."<sup>6</sup>

But while official U.S. strategy characterizes the military tasks encompassed by MOOTW as an important part of the country's response to a post-Cold War world, it also makes clear that MOOTW must play second fiddle to good old-fashioned war. "The

primary mission of our Armed Forces is not peace operations; it is to deter and, if necessary, to fight and win conflicts...."<sup>7</sup> The National Military Strategy puts it even more bluntly -- "But let there be no doubt about one fundamental fact: military forces exist - are organized, trained, and equipped - first and foremost to fight and win America's wars."<sup>8</sup> Although our official strategy suggests that the appropriate military response to most threats to U.S. security will be MOOTW, U.S. forces will continue to concentrate upon the preparation of the use of "decisive force" to "fight and win" with a "two major regional contingency focus."<sup>9</sup>

MOOTW -- nothing new

Although the U.S. military and National Command Authority may be reluctant to elevate MOOTW to a status equal to that of warfighting, U.S. forces have undertaken countless MOOTW "campaigns" since the birth of the Republic. As General Boyd has pointed out, the Army:

has historically been used under Presidential authority to carry out a full range of OOTW missions. These have ranged from the suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, to Robert E. Lee's channel work on the Mississippi in 1839, to the protection of American westward migration, to sanitation work in the Philippines, Cuba and Panama.<sup>10</sup>

The U.S. Marine Corps waged dozens of "small wars" in the Philippines, China and the Caribbean during the period between 1895 and 1940.<sup>11</sup> And by all accounts, the U.S. military will remain involved in MOOTW missions -- "Some people would prefer we put a sign outside the Pentagon that says 'We only do the big ones'...But as strong as the temptation may be to do this, we cannot lead or remain the world's most influential nation if we turn a blind eye to tragedies where millions are at risk or if

we try to ignore the Bosnias and the Haitis."<sup>12</sup>

MOOTW -- a very big basket

Not only does the U.S. military have deep experience in MOOTW, but many activities officially designated as MOOTW are missions which in fact have long been directly linked to warfighting or could easily be classified as traditional uses of military power. Most observers think of MOOTW deployments in terms of peace operations and humanitarian rescues, ancillary to the military's primary duties. But the Joint Chiefs have cast a much wider doctrinal net. Joint Pub 3-07 lists 16 types of MOOTW operations (and suggests that additional missions are conceivable):

arms control  
combating terrorism  
DOD support to counter drug operations  
enforcement of sanctions/maritime intercept operations  
enforcing exclusion zones  
ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight  
humanitarian assistance  
military support to civil authorities (domestic disasters/law enforcement)  
nation assistance/support to counterinsurgency  
noncombat evacuation operations  
peace operations  
protection of shipping  
recovery operations  
show of force operations  
strikes and raids  
support to insurgencies<sup>13</sup>

Of the 16 missions, five represent activities that have long been part of armed forces tasking: freedom of navigation; protection of shipping; recovery operations; show of force operations; and, strikes and raids. Noncombatant evacuation operations are a manifestation of one of the Government's most basic responsibilities -- the protection of U.S. citizens, and hence cannot be classified as "ancillary." Maritime intercept

operations and the enforcement of exclusion zones can be (and often have been) undertaken in times of "real" war. The precedent for the military's support of civil authorities dates from the 18th century. Out of list of 16, then, only seven can be characterized as "non-traditional" or "anomalous" or "new" -- arms control, combating terrorism, counter drug operations, humanitarian assistance, nation assistance, peacekeeping, and support to insurgencies. Not coincidentally, five of the seven doctrinal publications issued (or scheduled to be issued) in support of Joint Pub 3-07 deal with exactly these "non-traditional" military operations.<sup>14</sup>

#### What is MOOTW anyway?

The concept of "military operations other than war" (besides leading a hypothetical Top Ten List entitled 'most awkward official acronyms') is an oddity in the doctrinal literature as it is defined in a manner both inherently negative and miscellaneous in scope. The term, in and of itself, suggests that MOOTW represents all those military operations which are "not war." (To add to the definitional problem, joint doctrine does not actually define "war," but does imply that war is synonymous with "large scale, sustained combat operations."<sup>15</sup>) Indeed, Joint Pub 3-0 describes MOOTW in almost exactly that fashion: "Military operations other than war encompass a wide range of activities where the military instrument of power is used for purposes other than large-scale combat operations usually associated with war."<sup>16</sup> Defining a complex concept in terms of only what it is not, does not make for a very precise formulation.

This imprecision is compounded by a current doctrine that

does not clearly draw the line between war and MOOTW along the dimensions of either force, geography or time. As it now stands, MOOTW may or may not involve "the use or threat of force."<sup>17</sup> "It is possible for part of a theater to be in a wartime state while MOOTW is being conducted elsewhere in the same theater."<sup>18</sup> Finally, "a commander's campaign plan should include a transition from wartime operation to MOOTW."<sup>19</sup>

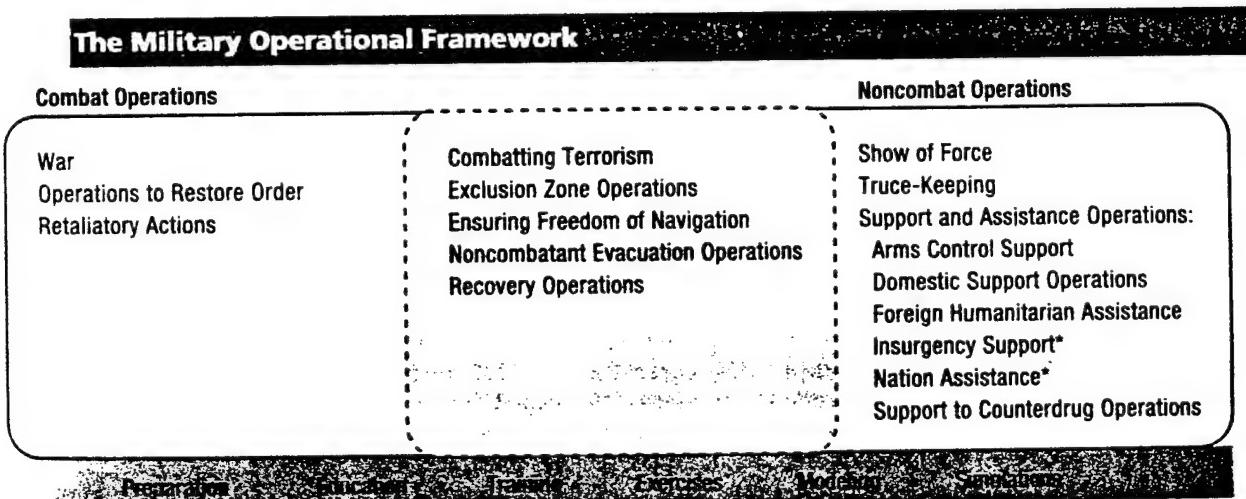
In the current doctrine's defense, Joint Pub 3-0 does posit that military operations are arrayed in a "range" based upon their employment in war vs. MOOTW and can be characterized by their support for different national security goals (see figure 1<sup>20</sup>). However, the typology does not really classify military operations within a range at all, it simply delineates a binary distinction between war and MOOTW. While grouping missions by strategic goal may provide an over-arching rationale for a mission, making such distinctions is difficult. For example, is not one goal of counterinsurgency to "fight and win"? Can't antiterrorism help "deter war"? Shouldn't part of the purpose of peacekeeping be to "promote peace"?

But the fundamental problem with the current typology is that it lends little help to the operational commander in conceptualizing the key aspects of a mission, e.g., the level of threat, the applicability of the principles of war or, the operational objective. As one set of authors observed: "An alphabetical list of 16 [MOOTW] items is just that. It neither associates an operation with a common purpose (such as combat or noncombat) nor focuses on the appropriate military role...A framework is needed to clarify how the military instrument is used in non-war situations."<sup>21</sup>

## The Range of Military Operations



## The Story and Gottlieb Operational Framework



\*Note: The United States reserves the right to use force during support to counterinsurgency (part of nation assistance) and during support to insurgency when it is in its interest to do so.

### The search for an operational framework

These same authors suggest that military operations should therefore be grouped within an operational framework consisting of "intersecting areas (combat and noncombat operations) supported by a solid foundation of preparation"<sup>22</sup> (see figure 2).<sup>23</sup> This proposed framework does, however, retain some degree of the fuzziness found in the doctrinal literature -- "operations in the intersecting area are actions that, depending on the situation, may or may not involve combat."<sup>24</sup>

That is not to say that this conceptualization is not of value. It does signal to the operational commander that the mindset of a particular mission should be essentially one of combat, one of noncombat, or one in which a rapid transition may be required. But the framework does suffer from its unidimensional nature. It implies, for example, that the most important distinction between "war" and "domestic support operations" is the level of combat a commander can expect to encounter and that somehow "trucekeeping" (more commonly called "peacekeeping") is merely a scaled down version of "operations to restore order."<sup>25</sup> The framework lays out military operations as if missions are hammers in a tool box, with the tack hammers arranged on the right, the carpentry hammers in the middle, and the sledge hammers on the left. The point here is that sometimes a military operation shouldn't employ a hammer at all, but rather a scalpel or a bottle of glue.

The classification of military operations, like the classification of any complex phenomenon, is by nature arbitrary. One could propose dozens of reasonable "second dimensions" to add to the above framework to further classify

operations in a meaningful way -- for example, by likely size of forces, by lead service, or by general purpose (e.g., support/assistance vs. coercion.) But the goal should be to choose the dimension which best illuminates the often blurry line between war and MOOTW and signals a concept of fundamental importance to the operational commander.

#### The fundamental distinction

As often the case in military analysis, one has to look no further than Clausewitz for assistance. Clausewitz states, "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>26</sup> If war, then, is composed of two essential elements, force and compellence, "non-war," or MOOTW, must be composed of the two opposing elements, namely the non-use of force (non-combat) and consent. The current framework incorporates the notion of combat and non-combat; now the dimension of consent must be added.

In fact, Army peace operations doctrine already stresses the importance of consent for commanders:

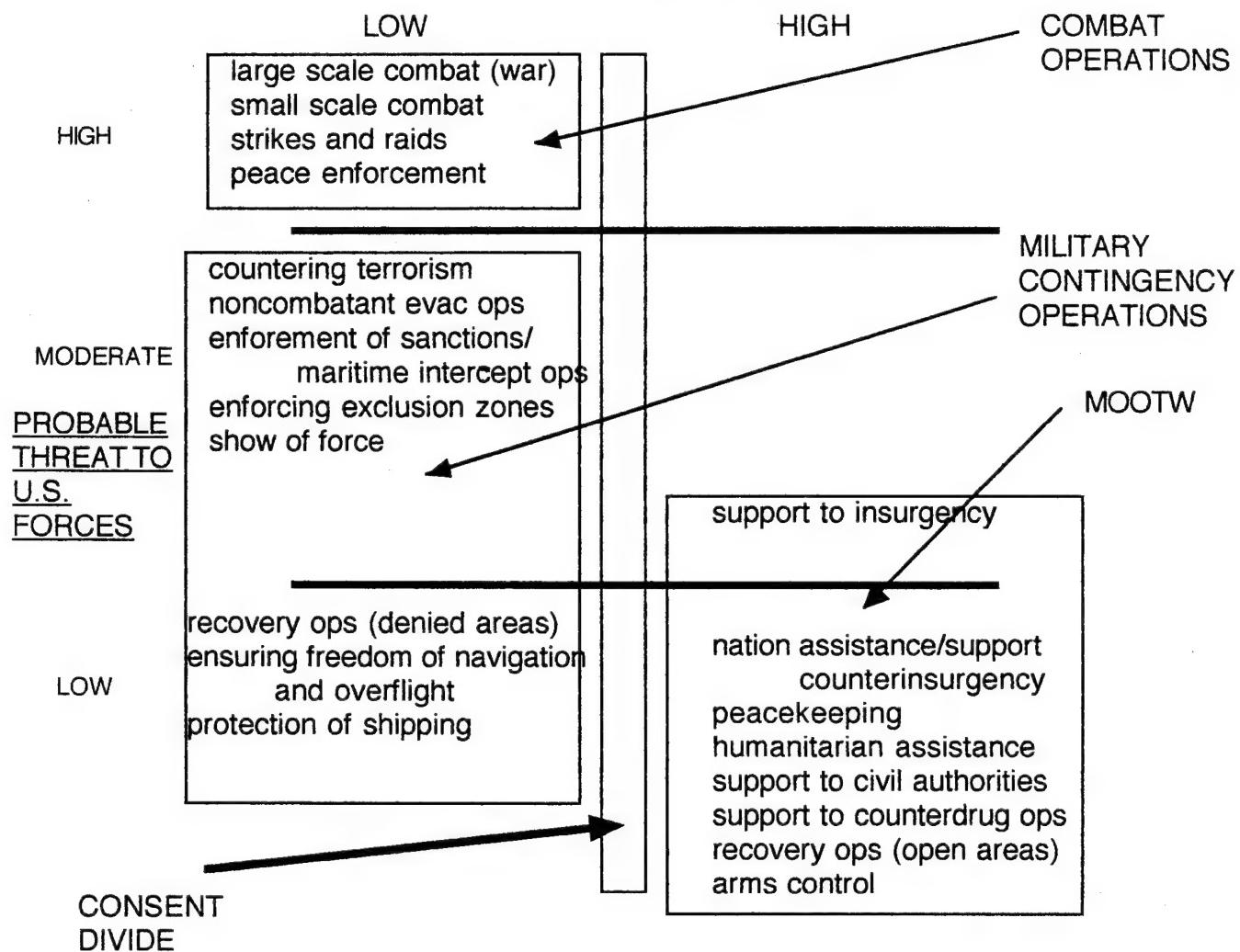
In war, consent is not an issue of concern for the military commander. In peace operations, however, the level of consent determines the fundamentals of the operation...loss of consent may lead to an uncontrolled escalation of violence and profoundly change the nature of the operation...The crossing of the consent divide from peacekeeping to peace enforcement is a policy level decision that fundamentally changes the nature of the operation.<sup>27</sup>

#### A new operational framework

A new military operational framework which embodies these concepts is offered at figure 3. I have chosen to rename the dimension of combat vs. non-combat "level of threat," as operational commanders more often think in those terms during mission planning. (According to Joint Pub 3-0, an essential

**FIGURE 3**

Military Operational Framework  
CONSENT/COOPERATION



element of a strategic estimate is "the assessment of the threats to accomplishment of assigned objectives."<sup>28</sup>) I have also expanded the concept of consent to "consent/cooperation" to imply that ideally consent should not only be passive (simple acquiescence), but contain an active component (cooperation) as well.

The proposed framework also regroups military operations within three broad categories based on the dimensions of expected threat and consent: combat operations, military contingency operations, and MOOTW. Combat operations are high threat, utilize force and employ warfighting doctrine. (Any reader who questions the inclusion of peace enforcement in this category should consider the comment made by Gen. William Garrison during Senate testimony -- "If we had put one more ounce of lead on South Mogadishu on the night of 3 and 4 October, I believe it would have sunk."<sup>29</sup> Military contingency operations are those missions, carried out in a moderate to low threat environment, which can be directly linked to warfighting or classified as traditional uses of military power. Under this scheme, MOOTW would consist of a shorter list of missions than contained in current doctrine and represent lower threat operations undertaken with the clear consent and cooperation of the activity's targeted "object." MOOTW encompasses all those operations on the other side of the consent divide.

#### A matter of consent

Consent and cooperation are certainly key to successful peace operations. But the same principle applies to all MOOTW operations identified on figure 3. Arms control verification cannot be fully realized without the total consent and

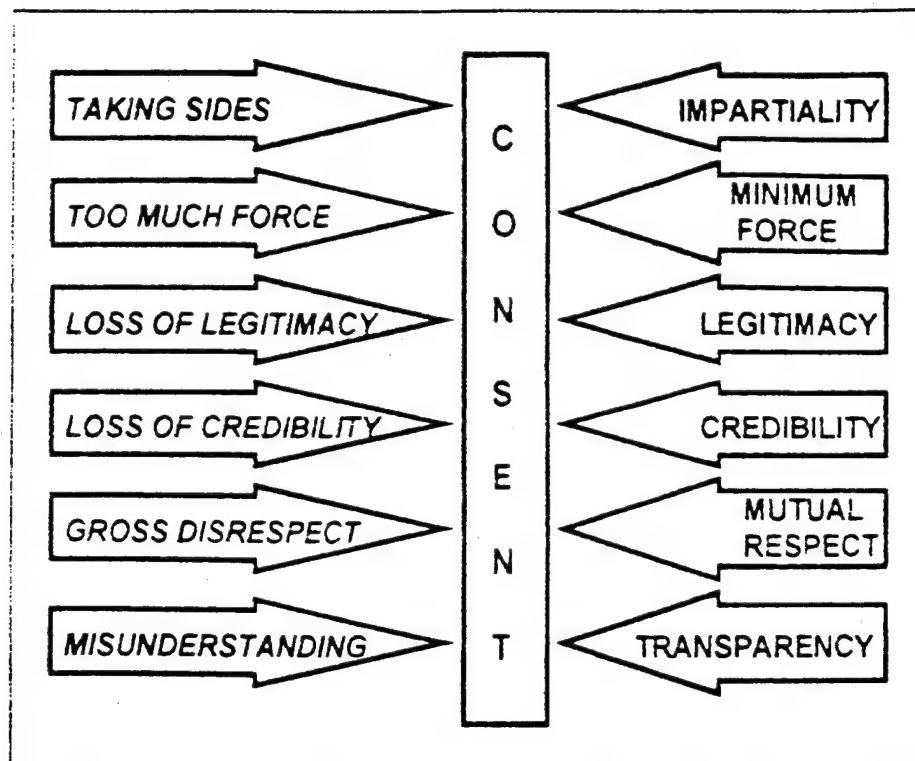
cooperation of the host, "verified" nation; military personnel cannot carry out enforcement activities in support of civil authorities without the consent and cooperation of the majority of the "policed" citizens.

Consent during a MOOTW mission should be present on both the operational and tactical levels -- consent within an operation (the tactical level) should supplement consent for an operation (the operational level). Not only must consent for a peacekeeping mission be granted by a host government, it should be validated by belligerent forces and the local populace. At the operational level, consent is usually obtained via prior diplomatic agreement, e.g., a formal petition to the UN for peacekeepers or a request from a state governor's office for disaster relief assistance. But within a MOOTW mission, consent may be intangible and vulnerable, subject to local events and public opinion.<sup>30</sup> One of the operational commander's priority duties must be the preservation of the consent divide.

The consent divide, particularly at the local level, can be pierced, and even eventually destroyed, by a host of inadvertent actions ranging from misunderstanding to the use of too much force (see figure 4<sup>31</sup>). To pierce the divide risks loss of popular support for the MOOTW deployment, an escalation of violence, heightened political tension and mission failure:

To cross the consent divide may also be to cross a Rubicon. Once on the other side, there is little chance of getting back, and the only way out is likely to be by leaving the theatre, as events in both Beirut and Somalia have demonstrated. If the consent divide is to be crossed it should be as a deliberate premeditated act with appropriate force structures, equipment and doctrine - not as an accidental drift.<sup>32</sup>

## Piercing the Consent Divide



An operational commander, then, should utilize every tool he has to preserve consent within the theater, including negotiation, strong host country liaison and a robust civil affairs/public information program. Failure can spell an unexpected slip from peacekeeping to peace enforcement,<sup>33</sup> in essence a shift from peace to war.

#### The principles of war and MOOTW

Current doctrine establishes two overlapping lists which represent the principles of war and MOOTW:<sup>34</sup>

<u>War</u>	<u>MOOTW</u>
Objective	Objective
Unity of Command	Unity of Effort
Offensive	Security
Simplicity	Legitimacy
Mass	Perseverance
Economy of Force	Restraint
Security	
Maneuver	
Surprise	

Under the official "range of military operations" concept, principles from both lists could conceivably apply to almost any given operation -- "Commanders now have 15 principles from which to choose. They are written on separate lists in our current doctrine to promote understanding, but the key is for commanders to apply them as homogeneous sets to specific situations."<sup>35</sup>

Admittedly, the proposed military operational framework, with its three broad operational categories, could further complicate the choice of principles by a commander. For example, a peace enforcement deployment, while at times involving combat, should probably be characterized by restraint. Legitimacy is often an important element of the enforcement of sanctions, in

the new framework a military contingency operation, not a MOOTW mission. On the other side of the coin, during Operation Provide Comfort (northern Iraq) U.S. peacekeepers found themselves "in a dynamic 'war' of maneuver where no shots were exchanged."<sup>36</sup>

There is no clean way to compartmentalize the rules of war and MOOTW. It is probably safe to say, however, that from the operational commander's perspective, the application of the principles of war should predominate (but not exclusively) in combat operations, the rules of MOOTW should predominate during MOOTW missions, and a mixture of the two may well be appropriate for contingency operations.

#### Adding to the principles of MOOTW

One should hesitate to add to the list of principles governing any complex phenomenon; principles are meant to guide and simplify interpretation and planning, not cloud and clutter them. Nevertheless, a review of past U.S. and UN MOOTW missions does reveal at least three common themes that are so pervasive that their inclusion on the list of principles of MOOTW is worth consideration:

preservation of consent: As explained above, the preservation of consent and cooperation is absolutely critical to MOOTW operations.

local knowledge: It is often said that in war one should know your enemy. Local knowledge may be even more important in MOOTW given the extended, intense contact U.S. forces maintain with the local populace and host government officials. Sometimes the knowledge is as simple as better communication -- lessons learned reports emphasize that U.S. operations in Haiti and Somalia should have benefited from the presence of more translators and

language qualified troops and officers. Sometimes knowledge of local customs can head off potential disasters as in the following example drawn from UNTAC's experiences in Cambodia:

...at Battambang, a freak wind came up. The United Nations team suddenly heard small arms fire breaking out at the far end of town...they believed they were under ground attack..they started to get on the radio, were ready to call for an extraction, when some of the folks on the roof of the hotel ...looked outside and saw in fact that the Cambodians were just firing up in the air to 'stop the wind'...that's a normal Cambodian practice.<sup>37</sup>

An operational commander should ensure that his forces are as well-trained and briefed concerning local conditions as humanly possible.

versatility: The concept of versatility is nothing new to the U.S. Army; it is enshrined as a tenet of Army operations and defined as "the ability of units to meet diverse mission requirements."<sup>38</sup> This tenet is of particular relevance to MOOTW missions, as U.S. forces can assume multi-functional roles -- part soldier, part policeman, part referee, part doctor and part social worker: "Consider the poor platoon leader who faces such situations as:...Kurdish guerrillas want to pass through to attack the Iraqis...a mother brings in a dying child... the press wants a story and wants freedom to pass into Iraqi-held territory - the incidents were virtually endless."<sup>39</sup> An operational commander must be prepared for just about anything.

#### Overwhelming power and MOOTW

Over the course of the past decade, the U.S. military has embraced the notion that decisive or overwhelming combat power must be brought to bear in a theater of war to reduce casualties and hasten victory. While this doctrine proved to be of great value in Panama and Kuwait, it stands in stark contrast to the

operational environment encountered in many MOOTW missions, which can be protracted and by nature favor negotiation and cooperation over combat. This mismatch causes some politicians and military leaders to regard MOOTW with suspicion -- MOOTW doesn't fit within the common wisdom on how America should go to war.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly the employment of decisive force (or better said, the deployment of an impressive array of forces) has its place in MOOTW -- a commander must marshal sufficient personnel and resources to successfully fulfill an assigned mission and protect U.S. service members from harm. Under certain circumstances, however, less is better.

The 55-person limit placed on the number of U.S. military trainers in El Salvador during the 1980's was probably a blessing in disguise as it nudged the Salvadorans toward self-reliance and severely constrained the U.S. role in the conflict, thereby boosting the legitimacy of the Salvadoran government. In peace operations, "the history of intervention shows that the intrusive arrival of a powerful and aggressive third-party force, particularly one that comprises largely foreign troops, will incite an equally determined and aggressive reaction and rejection by local people"<sup>41</sup> -- witness events in Somalia and Beirut. In determining proper force size in a MOOTW mission, the operational commander must balance the assigned mission against the risk of the unintended consequences of the introduction of too large a force.

#### War versus MOOTW redux

This paper has argued that there are significant differences between war and MOOTW. The operations lie on

opposite sides of the consent divide. War (and other combat operations) are waged in a high threat environment; the threats to MOOTW participants are inherently much lower, assuming that the Rubicon of consent is not crossed. The principles of war dominate the conceptualization of combat operations; the principles of MOOTW will reign in other circumstances. For MOOTW, the use of overwhelming force may not be warranted; in war it is doctrine. Joint doctrine suggests some other differences: in MOOTW, the rules of engagement tend to be restrictive and complex; the purposes may be multiple; and, a premium is often placed on interagency cooperation.<sup>42</sup>

The application of operational art for combat missions is a well-developed discipline. In MOOTW, the colors on the operational art palette are different. Certain operational art concepts are of limited use in MOOTW, e.g., operational fires and deception. Other elements are applicable, but the shading may be more subtle -- for example, the determination of the "enemy's" center of gravity and the desired end state. And still other concepts are just as vital to MOOTW missions as they are to combat missions, including planning, sequencing, logistics, intelligence and security.

These admitted differences between war and MOOTW are perhaps, as Robert Utley's observation cited at the top of this paper suggests, what makes MOOTW "the most difficult of all military assignments." The contrasts also feed the perception that somehow MOOTW is inherently "messier" than war -- war is about killing the enemy, seizing territory, and winning a quick, decisive victory, while MOOTW is about such amorphous matters as consent, nation building and perseverance. But our own history

suggests that MOOTW deployments are not necessarily quagmires nor war necessarily clear-cut. Operation Sea Angel, a model humanitarian mission to Bangladesh, was completed in five weeks;<sup>43</sup> the Vietnam war dragged on for a decade.

The key to avoiding "messiness" in any military operation is, of course, the enunciation of clear national security policy objectives and the development of a strategy to secure those objectives at a reasonable cost and with reasonable risk. A strategy-policy mismatch can be disastrous for any military operation, be it war or MOOTW. MOOTW is not inherently messy; but the policy objectives guiding any given operation may be unclear or ill-considered.

Unfortunately, current MOOTW doctrine misses this point and instead implies that MOOTW is more "political" than war. According to Joint Pub 3-07, "Political objectives drive MOOTW at every level from strategic to tactical. A distinguishing characteristic of MOOTW is the degree to which political objectives influence operations and tactics."<sup>44</sup> True enough. But the same can be said of war -- as Clausewitz observed, war too should be the continuation of political intercourse, always an instrument of policy. While there may be differences between war and MOOTW, at their cores the two are functionally inseparable -- the embodiment of the use of military power to obtain a political object of vital interest at a cost and risk commensurate with the stakes involved.

NOTES

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11. Michael H. Hoffman, "War, Peace, and Interventional Armed Conflict: Solving the Peace Enforcer's Paradox," Parameters, Winter 1995-96, 43.
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22. Ibid., 103.
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25. see Charles Dobbie, "A Concept for Post-Cold War Peace Keeping," Survival, Autumn 1994, 142, for a fuller explanation of the dangers of classifying missions on a continuum.
26. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Indexed ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75.
27. Department of the Army, Field Manual No. 100-23 Peace Operations (Washington: 1994), 23.
28. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Operations, III-3.
29. Dobbie, 127.
30. Ibid., 122-124.
31. Ibid., 132.
32. Ibid., 131.
33. Here, as elsewhere in the paper, "peacekeeping" is used to mean military operations undertaken with the consent of all major belligerent parties; "peace enforcement" is the application of military force to compel compliance with accepted resolutions or sanctions; "peace operations" is the generic term which encompasses both peacekeeping and peace enforcement; see FM 100-23, 4-6.
34. Boyd, 24.

35. Ibid., 24.

36. John P. Abizaid, "Lessons for Peacekeepers," Military Review, March 1993, 12.

37. George Steuber, quoted in William H. Lewis, ed., Military Implications of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (Washington: National Defense University. Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993), 72.

38. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5 Operations (Washington: 1993), 2-9.

39. Abizaid, 16.

40. John Mackinlay, "Problems for U.S. Forces in Operations Beyond Peacekeeping," in Peacekeeping: The Way Ahead? ed. William H. Lewis (Washington: National Defense University. Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993), 41-43.

41. Ibid., 44.

42. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Operations Other Than War, I-1 - I-2.

43. Ibid., III-6 - III-8.

44. Ibid., I-2.

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